

F
5039
.D3C
1873

NUNC COGNOSCO EX PARTE



TRENT UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

THE
CANADIAN MILITIA!

Its Organization and present condition,

BY

LIEUT.-COL. DAVIS,

Commanding 37th Regt. of Militia, or Haldimand Rifle Battn.



PUBLISHED BY
WILLIAM T. SAWLE, "GRAND RIVER SACHEM" OFFICE,
CALEDONIA, ONTARIO.

1873.

THE

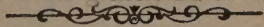
CANADIAN MILITIA!

Its Organization and present condition,

BY

LIEUT.-COL. DAVIS,

Commanding 37th Regt. of Militia or Haldimand Rifles Batt.



PUBLISHED BY

WILLIAM T. SAWLE, "GRAND RIVER SACHEM" OFFICE,

CALEDONIA, ONTARIO.

1873.

PREFACE.

Military or Militia matters being generally at a discount in Canada, the author of the following pages can scarcely hope that his efforts to awaken public attention to the subject, will meet with any better success than those of his predecessors in the same track, who wrote with the same object in view.

The only apology then necessary for republishing the letters of "L. C." which appeared in the *Hamilton Times* in May last is furnished by the following extracts, one from a speech of Hon. Mr. Langevin, acting Minister of Militia and Defence, the other from the *Volunteer Review* of June 24th, 1873:

"Hon. Mr. LANGEVIN agreed to a certain extent with the member for Lambton. The intention was not to continue the system as at present. They had about seen that it had not produced the results expected, and therefore the Militia Department had decided, instead of admitting young men indiscriminately, that admission should be restricted to men holding commissions or wishing to qualify for such position. The Department hoped to come down next session with a new proposition. He admitted that the camps had not given the result expected. Nothing would give the Government more pleasure than to improve the system; and he would inform the House that after next year when the stores purchased from the Imperial authorities would be paid for, a reduction in the expenditure would take place."

The *Volunteer Review* commenting on a letter in the *Woodstock Times*, says:

"We hope the *Times* will keep the subject before the country, it needs ample discussion, as the *Volunteer* officers in the House of Commons appear to have ignored their connection with the force altogether."

YORK, October 20, 1873.

F 5039. D3C 1873

THE CANADIAN MILITIA!

ITS ORGANIZATION AND PRESENT CONDITION.

In considering the question of Canadian defences, the first difficulty that presents itself now-a-days, is that there is no plan for combination and concerted action between the Imperial troops and Colonial forces, and that neither Imperial or Canadian authorities have apparently given the matter any consideration.

The Committee which in 1862 drafted what is now known as Lyson's Bill, (and of which Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier were members,) reported: "That the strategic defences of Canada came within the province of the General Commanding the Forces, but, that, with one thousand miles of open frontier, fifty thousand men in arms, with a reserve of the same number, would be insufficient, without a strong force of Regulars, and a powerful fleet of gunboats."

This report was submitted to Parliament more than ten years ago. Let us see what steps have been taken since then to carry out its recommendations, Sir John A. Macdonald being head of the Government, Sir George being head of the Militia Department.

There is a nominal force of 43,000 Volunteer Militia enrolled, and scattered over the Dominion from Halifax to Manitoba, but where are the Regulars? Where the gunboats? Where the General commanding the forces? Where the fifty thousand reserve?

But people may say, What is the use of bringing this ugly question to the front now, when everything is so calm and peaceful? Well, there are lots of unbelievers who hold that the era of peace and brotherly love, assured by the Washington Treaty, is nothing more than a breathing spell for the Yankees, to get up some fresh demand. This may be so, or not. In any case, a well organized Militia is a necessity for Canada; for we have already proved our neighbor to be a grasping, covetous tyrant, and if we want to look upon ourselves as reasonably well insured, we must keep up a good fighting establishment, not only to secure our liberties, but because the knowledge of such a fact actually lessens the danger of war.

Let us look, then first, at the composition of the Canadian Militia, and how it is organized, recruited, and officered; and, then, after taking a glance at its interior economy, proceed to examine its present condition, and its ability to perform the duty expected from it, viz: to defend British North America.

Before going into our own part of the subject, it will not be out of place to show how men are obtained for the Militia in Great Britain and Ireland, and how the force is officered there.

The supplies for a certain number of men are voted yearly by Parliament. The present fixed establishment for the militia is 120,000 men, to be increased in time of war to 180,000. This number is divided among the counties according to population, the contingent for one regiment sometimes being drawn from three or four counties, while in other cases the county may furnish three or four battalions. Each regiment has its adjutant, sergeant-major and non-commissioned staff, on permanent service, and recruiting for the regiment and militia reserve goes on continuously. The men are regularly enlisted for five years, and after having passed the doctor, are regularly attested. They receive a bounty of five dollars on enlistment, and five dollars each subsequent year of their service *in addition* to their pay of 38 cents a day. Twenty cents more is added to the pay of each man for the first day of training, and a pair of boots, two shirts and two pair of socks, each the best of their kind, is given to every man at the termination of the season's drill. The officers are all men of good standing and social position, a good proportion of them in every regiment being regular officers on half pay, or who have retired from the army. Until last year, all the officers were commissioned by the Lord Lieutenant of the county; now they are appointed direct by the Queen, and every man must qualify within six months after being gazetted. The rank and file of the British militia is made up from the laboring class, principally from the men whose average earnings is one and sixpence to two shillings per day; yet, while out on their annual training, their pay and allowances are almost double their daily wages.

The annual drill lasts 28 days, with from fourteen days, to six weeks preliminary drill for recruits. Duty is performed in the most thorough manner. Crime of all kinds is rare, and promptly punished, while a rigid inspection from the General in command of the District at the end of the drill, and his report to the Commander-in-Chief, enables the War Office authorities to tell at a glance, the strength and efficiency of every regiment of militia in the service.

Turn now to how things are done in Canada. In the first place, the Volunteers hold the relative position of the regular militia of Great Britain. Parliament votes the money for the annual drill, and until 1871 all the drill allowed for was eight days in the year; now sixteen days are given. Ontario is supposed to furnish 18,070 men; Quebec, 14,382; Nova Scotia, 4,284; New Brunswick, 3,264. Well, how is the quota of each Province secured? Take Ontario, for example. There are in the Province 82 Regimental divisions and eight Brigade divisions. One would naturally think that each regimental division would furnish men in proportion to its general population, and that the brigades would be of corresponding strength. Not at all; there

is no such arrangement, nor any provision for such an equitable system of service. Some counties give a regiment, some don't give a man. Two or three townships in another county furnish the regiment, the majority of the townships in the same county not giving a solitary volunteer. One place provides men and money for the defence of the country, the other does nothing of the kind; yet the township that supplies from seventy to a hundred men pays just as much taxes as the township that gives neither a man or a dollar; *both are equally patriotic in the eye of the law.*

Here, then, is one of the inherent defects of our militia. The quota not being regularly apportioned, the service is not equalized, (a standing ground of complaint) and what adds to the mischief is, that there is no system, planned or perfected, for *obtaining men for the active militia at all, alias for the Volunteers.*

Up until 1863 the volunteer militia corps were all Independent companies, with the exception of Six Battalions in Upper, and nine in Lower Canada. In 1866 Colonel Macdougall organized the isolated companies into Battalions, giving to each a county designation and permanent head-quarters. The difficulty of obtaining men, even in his day was frequently brought to his notice, and the draft of the Militia Bill which he prepared, recommended either the Ballot, a Bounty, or rotation of service. Which of these alternatives the country will now take up will very soon have to be determined on, for every man knows that the Volunteer Militia exists now by its own choice, and that it needs but little more indifference and neglect to dissolve it altogether.

Turn now to the material of the Active or Volunteer Militia. In cities and towns it is made up, as a rule, of mechanics, working men and clerks. In the rural districts, it is composed of the farmers' sons and their day laborers, of boatmen and mill hands. The ordinary wages of all these workers is from a dollar and a half to two dollars and a half a day; but, when they are called out for annual drill, their pay is fifty cents a day and their rations, worth about 18 cents more, a total of less than one half their daily wages. [The wages are, if anything, understated; common laborers on railroads now are paid 12s. a day, while farm hands are offered \$10 and \$15 a month, by the year, and board.] But surely the Government makes some concession or grants some privilege to men who make such sacrifices, says the reader. Far from it. There is nothing provided for the men, even when they are on duty, but a forage cap, that helps the sun to peel the skin off their faces, a pair of serge trowsers and a uniform coat. Everything in the shape of underclothing—boots, socks and all the necessary articles for personal cleanliness—have to be provided by the man himself at his own expense. The consequence is, that as there is no uniformity in what the men do procure, not one man out of every twenty has a pair of boots fit to march in, and I saw last year, in one short march from Clifton to Niagara, nearly half a company going barefoot, and the men of two Regiments scattered, limping and straggling along the road for the whole thirteen miles.

We will next look at the organization of the Militia, and begin with the company unit.

A wide-awake tavern keeper, or energetic young store keeper, determines to turn to account the excitement which prevailed all over the country in 1866. A public meeting is called and stirring speeches are made. The Country is in danger; "God Save the Queen" is given in all kinds of keys, and "Rule Britannia" with all manner of variations. The Fenians catch it rough (with the tongue). The meeting is not at all unwilling to have a slap at the Yankees, and it is unanimously resolved, that Slabtown must have a Volunteer Rifle Company. Three cheers for the Queen terminates the meeting, which is immediately re-organized in the next tavern.

After a little delay and some difficulty, a sheet of foolscap, with pen and ink is procured, and volunteers press forward by the dozen. Next morning a roll of fifty or sixty names is forwarded to the Militia Department, with the request for a Service Roll and immediate inspection.

The Government, glad to get men, (as there was then every prospect of their being wanted,) make no unnecessary delay, and the papers are sent on forthwith. A letter, with the magical O. H. M. S. on the envelope, renews all the previous excitement. The captain (*in esse*) immediately calls together the company, the last man coming in on a run, lest he should be late. The conditions of service are read, and every man signs without hesitation; (they are ready then to sign anything.) A week after, the company is inspected by the Brigade Major, who pays them a glowing compliment on their loyalty and fine personal appearance. The next week they are gazetted, and there you are "The Slabtown Volunteer Rifle Company, Captain Blank."

Drill is commenced forthwith, military ardor burns high in the breast of every volunteer, and there is an average attendance of forty or fifty men. The captain is stern and attentive, and the company really makes wonderful progress. The rifles and uniform arrive, the men are paraded and have a shooting match—and a second company could be organized on the spot. The first year, the company is a perfect success; the next, a slight weakness is apparent; the third year, there is a decided falling off; the fourth year, the captain thinks he can muster about forty, *if he gets time enough*; the fifth—well, he don't know; "the men, you see, were called out to drill last year at a bad time; a good many of them lost their hay, and some more lost their places, and they didn't like the way they were treated when in camp at Jericho," etc. The sixth year, the captain and ten or a dozen men are all that remains of that famous company. The novelty has worn off, the excitement died out, and nothing has been introduced as a substitute for either; and although a capital drill shed, costing some \$700 or \$800, has been erected at the company headquarters, the shed is devoted to agricultural shows.—Where the tramp of armed men, and the sharp word of command could be heard a couple of nights in the week, you will now find two or three threshing machines; and where you could turn out forty men in two or three hours, you may now hunt all day and not be able to parade a dozen. Patriotism and pluck, with here and there an eye to business, was the motive power which started the volunteers; but the organization (if you choose to call it such) of all, was more or less alike, and all alike are now in the condition of the Slabtown Rifles.

Whose fault is this? With the spirit of Canada in '61, '66 and '70, anything might be done (for any Government would have been supported in any measure, no matter at what cost) for the defense of the country, but the golden opportunity was lost, no one apparently knowing how to embrace it.

But the company is ordered out for the annual drill, and we will start with it to camp. Now is the winter of the Captain's discontent. How the — is he to make up the company? "Tom, old fellow, won't you come with us to Niagara this year? Nothing much to do you know, and you will be back before haying." Tom can't see it. "Ned, you were a corporal in the old company, eh? Come with us for this drill and I'll make you color-sergeant." Say, Jack, won't you help me to fill up a bit; here we are for Niagara next Thursday morning and I've only got twelve men; do give us a lift like a good fellow; Here are twenty dollars; go and see Pat and Bill and Harry; tell them I will never ask them out again, if they will only come this one time; make the money go as far as you can; no swearing in you know, and if any of them want to come home before the camp is over, I will get them leave from the Colonel. — the whole thing I'll resign."

On the fated Thursday morning, five or six companies are formed up at the station, waiting for the cars, and to look at them, one would think that "motley" was the wear of the Canadian militia. Here is a fellow in a straw hat; there one in a wide-awake. Here is one in a forage cap, trousers and shirt sleeves; there one with a uniform coat *across his arm*, but no other article of uniform about him. (The clothing has to last five years, understand, and has already been worn by two or three parties, coming out *minus* or *plus* something at every transfer.) The rifles and knapsacks alone, look serviceable, the rest of the get up being filthy through carelessness and neglect.

The cars bear in sight at last, and are saluted by a yell, which is returned with energy by a party of the gallant 191st, proceeding likewise to camp, and who in the meantime are amusing themselves in a war dance on the tops of the coaches. The train has scarcely stopped, till the station is covered by a cloud of skirmishers, ostensibly for water, in reality to "see a man" in every tavern in the neighborhood. By the time the men are on board, the skirmishers have closed, a good many showing that they have had enough of it. Off we go, the platforms covered with men, and in two or three hours, a fair proportion of the new arrivals, give conclusive evidence, that whiskey at least has done its duty. Any attempt at keeping order fails. The men have'nt been together before for a year, and most of them are greenhorns, who never were in uniform, who don't even know their officers. Many of the officers only hold provisional, or Regimental appointments, and won't attempt the exercise of any authority. The non-commissioned officers know nothing whatever about their duties, and if they did, are not going to make a row with their neighbors, may be there own relatives. The men in fact, are absolutely without restraint, and jump off in scores at every stopping place, in all stages of drunkenness, and in every variety of *dishabille*, and I've seen or heard myself, of almost every crime that disgraces a soldier in uniform, from insulting women, to threatening an officer,

being committed on the way to and from camp, almost unnoticed, but certainly unpunished. Now, if the efficiency and availability of the Canadian Militia be estimated by these Camps of Exercise, there is not an officer or man of experience who has been at one of them, but will laugh at the idea. The Adjutant-General is entitled to the gratitude of every volunteer for getting the additional eight days drill, and if he had the disciplined soldiers that he has been accustomed to, to move into camp, no doubt he would accomplish all the good he hoped for, but, under present conditions, the camps are a mere sham. The men are blarneyed or bribed for the occasion only. *Half-grown boys or decrepid old men, if they can only hold a rifle, are accepted with thanks, and when the camp is over, the whole thing vanishes like snow off a ditch. Try the experiment. In one month order one of these Regiments again into Camp and see the result.

Even if the men were all able-bodied, *bona fide* members of their respective corps, the time allowed for drill is far too short to make even an impression, much less to impart any real serviceable instruction. The first week is a mere settling down, and is used up in learning the men squad drill, and what their equipments are for, and how to wear them, and in hammering as much of the manual and firing exercise into them as time will allow. The second week is all that is left for real work, and in six days the men in camp are supposed to go through the whole field exercise, from the goose step to brigade drill, besides doing their share of guard-mounting (without ever having been instructed in that duty), ball practice, without ever having been taught how to use a rifle, and picket, without knowing the meaning of the word. As for outpost duty, or patrolling, everybody is in the same happy state of ignorance. No man saw them done, nor was any such duty ever attempted, nor was there time for such an attempt.

But the camp is over. The regiments return home; and each is resolved into its original elements of six or eight companies. Let us see, now, the relative positions of captains and commanding officers, and how they are affected by the eight or sixteen days' sojourn at the camp of instruction. *Imprimis*, each captain is absolute in his own company limits—altogether independent of the officer in command of the Regiment. By the Act of 1868, a captain can order out his company, without leave or license from the Lieutenant-Colonel, *and if the men choose to turn out*, he can have a parade. He can't force them out, however, inasmuch as he is met by the argument: "We have put in our drill for the year, and you have no claim on us." On the other hand, if he attempts compulsion and fine, the men quietly hand in their resignations, and there is another defunct company. The only duty, then, the captain has to do, from one year's end to the other, after returning from camp, is the care of the arms and stores of the company, and that he can attend to or not, just as he pleases; for the Colonel has no power to compel him. Regimental orders, if they suit the convenience of the parties concerned, may be obeyed and acted on, if not, not when the Commanding Officer is placed in the enviable position of issuing an order which he knows to be necessary, but which he cannot enforce. All the responsibilities of command, the understanding, upon "which the efficiency of any organized force is dependent," the habits of carrying out orders and instructions which

are only obtained by constant practice, are totally ignored and neglected. Even when officers have been reported more than once, for disobedience of orders, and wilful neglect of duty, all the satisfaction obtainable was, "There is no use sending this forward to Ottawa. They will never dismiss a man for such a cause."

Now, I've heard it asserted these camps were thoroughly equipped, and the men ready to take the field at a moment's notice. Well, there was not an ambulance in the camp I was at, nor a stretcher, not even transport for small arm ammunition. There was no medicine provided for the sick of at least one regiment I know of; while the men lay on the floor of the old hospital with a single blanket. There wasn't a set of Pioneer's tools in the Division, except in the Queen's Own, and they were bought by the officers, and *apropos* to this point, I know an officer, who, on the morning of the sham fight, sent down town to borrow, or buy, half a dozen of pickaxes and shovels, and they were not to be procured in the corporation.

I have already noticed the boots. Look now at the sixty-round pouches! A skirmisher would make as good time with a turf creel on his back. Old belts that were through the Crimea, Haversacks that will scarcely hold anything, and if worn, so as to let a man have the use of his limbs, cannot be got at, unless he takes off the whole kit, and all of the same beautiful tinge, produced by repeated coatings of grease and dirt, contrasting handsomely with the green tunic of the Rifleman, and the red coat of the Infantry soldier. Not a Regiment in the Division would average half-a-dozen non-commissioned officers thoroughly conversant with their duties, nor three Buglers who could perfectly sound a call. There wasn't an Armour Sergeant in either of the Brigades, while there should be one in every Battalion.

Such is the organization, material and discipline of what is grandiloquently called "The Canadian Army," and which its admirers maintain, should furnish a Brigade to take part in this year's autumn manœuvres in England. The whole system is make-believe—an army on paper—a sham that will fall to pieces on the first strain. The same kind of material will be scratched together again, in the same way, for the next camp, and so the show goes on.

Let us look at another noticeable clause in Lyson's Bill, "That all officers should be qualified before being appointed." This, from the outset, has been totally ignored, and is still a dead letter, for they are not even required to qualify, after they are gazetted. Practically test the acquirements of our officers, and how many come up to the mark? Take the Artillery for example, and leaving out the two schools of gunnery at Kingston and Quebec, how many of the officers know even the rudiments of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Geology, Drawing, Surveying, Field Works and Fortification? and these are not half of what they are supposed to have at their fingers' ends. How many of our Infantry officers could pass the examination required now from a Lieutenant in the Line before he can be promoted Captain?

I will give a portion *only* of what is laid down in General Order of September the 17th, 1872.

"Definition of Tactics, Tactical Units of the Three Arms, Principles which Regulate their Strength. General Functions of the Three Arms.

A.—Infantry—The Battalion: Its organization for tactical purposes. Rate of marching. Principles and objects of its formation and evolutions, viz: Line, Column, Echelon, Square, Changes of front, Changes of position, Principles of the employment of the three arms in action. In commencing the action. In the attack. In the pursuit. In the retreat. Disposition of the three arms for attack or defense, according to the above principles. The attack and defence of tactical points. The passage of rivers. Principles of the conduct of reconnoissances. Outpost duty, &c., &c."

How many of our Lieut.-Colonels have any knowledge of strategy or of the higher duties of the profession applicable to the rank which they hold? How many have heard of, or read the "Wellington Prize Essay," or "The Tactical Retrospect," or "The Infantry Lessons of the Autumn Manceuvres." How many copies of "Fire Discipline," or "The practice of the art of Infantry Fire in Action" are in the force? How many have seen the new orders for Brigade attacks, and are ready to impart the necessary information and instruction on this head to their own Battalions? These illustrations are only given for the sake of example, and to show if such qualifications are required in the Regular Army, how much more are they now an absolute necessity for Canada?

Read what one of the highest military authorities of the day, the late Sir John Burgoyne, says: "The very best irregular troops—and the best of our Volunteers are very irregular, however formidable they may be for individual valor—are *useless in masses*. It is then their deficiency in drill and discipline appears, for a good deal more than pluck and coolness is required, when opposed to troops of average bravery. It is then you have the greatest need of experienced officers, for when men are only half trained, your only hope is individual intelligence, and strict discipline."

Any force to be efficient, must keep up with the times, and who that knows our Militia will say that our officers possess that faculty of command, and that special knowledge of the duties of their respective ranks, which is of so much importance now-a-days. While the very latest improvements based on experiment, or actual trial, are only suitable for the field of modern warfare, our tactics and drill, our organization and equipment, are alike obsolete but religiously adhered to, while no attempt whatever has been made to supply the two greatest wants of the Militia—trained and experienced officers, and a sure supply of men. But fighting, after all, is the least important part of a war. It is the preparation which insures success; and therefore, perfect organization, and undoubted skill and efficiency, in every branch of the service, with superior discipline, will alone enable this country to make up for paucity of numbers, for Canada hasn't got men enough to spare to learn how to fight, as Grant took Richmond, viz.: *by expending* so many men a day.

But what are the Military Schools for? and what are they doing? says the reader. Well, the first two years they were open they were for the special benefit of the Service Militia—a force which neither then, or now has any existence. The schools were closed against Volunteer officers, unless they resigned. Although the folly of this course was soon apparent, and the schools thrown open to all alike, yet, as there was no compulsory qualification demanded, it was only in the cities where the schools were established, and their immediate

neighborhood, that they were taken advantage of. Half of the men, at least, who did pass belonged to neither Volunteer or Service Militia, but joined the school for the sake of "making a raise," while of the 5,000 cadets claimed, I question very much if there are 1,000 available in the Dominion.

The prestige of the Schools, too, has gone with the Regulars, as the present attendance shows, and the very class for whose benefit the Schools were re-opened (Volunteer Officers) are the very men who, as a rule, do not attend them. The staff of instructors, too, at the present schools is far too small—an Adjutant with one Sergeant Instructor—let them work as hard as they may, (and they do work hard) cannot do more than give a knowledge of the ordinary Field Exercise. They haven't got time, let them be ever so willing, to give more than a glance at the higher duties of an officer, much less to give a thorough training in general discipline, or interior economy.

For the present condition of the Canadian Militia, the present Imperial authorities are far more to blame than our own. No other Government but Mr. Gladstone's would have stripped Canada of all the Regular troops at the time, and in the manner which he did. No other Government but Mr. Gladstone's would have removed the troops at all, until they were satisfied that the Militia of a colony, which they want us to believe, they look upon as a portion of the Empire, was in such a condition of preparation, that it could take the field, and hold its ground, till reinforcements could arrive. No other Government but Mr. Gladstone's, after knowing that Canada had always been taught to depend upon the Imperial authorities for her Generals and Scientific officers, would leave the country without a single one of either. As long as there was even three or four Regular Regiments in Ontario and Quebec, the Volunteer Militia had models to guide them, and derived proportionate advantage from their superior knowledge. Moreover, the Regular officers in command, took all pains to create a healthy feeling of emulation whenever their Regiments and the Volunteers were brigaded together, and the prestige of victory was in the confidence felt by the men, as long as they knew they were to fight alongside the Regulars. Look at the moveable columns of Col. Macdougall. Why, they were ready to go anywhere, and try to do anything, although there was only a wing of a Regular Regiment, and a couple of guns to each brigade. They knew that they would be properly led, that they were under the command of professional soldiers, and would have the advice and assistance of men whose trade was war.

Who is to command now? Where are the Generals? Where the Scientific officers? Where the men to initiate a well regulated system for supply in the field? Where are the Engineers, and who knows anything of pontoons, field telegraphy, or army signalling? We have no Commissariat, no Transport, no Ordnance, no Stores, no Medical or Hospital department, no Wagon train, no Entrenching tools—we have nothing but a handful of half qualified officers, a nominal force of 43,000 men, and forty light field guns, 6 and 9 pounders, smooth bore.

Now, if Britain, with 90,000 Regular troops at home, with 120,000 Militia, with 180,000 Volunteers, and with nearly 15,000 Yeomanry, could not put in the field, *with a month's notice*, 100,000 effective men, how long would it take Canada, under present conditions, to place 50,000 effective men on the frontier, and organize and equip as many more in reserve?

But compare the Canadian policy of Great Britain with the Cuban policy of Spain—poor, distracted Spain. Well, poor as the Spaniard is, he is proud enough to keep 30,000 fighting men in Cuba, and will send as many more if they are needed, to hold the island; and shows his teeth so plainly, that Jonathan, with his mouth watering, has to keep a respectable distance. He knows well, if he interferes *openly*, he will have to fight, and that is a pastime he has no stomach for, even with such an opponent as Spain.

Every nation under the sun, worthy of the name, hangs like grim death to its Colonies, and only surrenders when it can no longer hold on. Britain, in Mr. Gladstone's hands, furnishes the one ignoble exception; for plaster it over as smooth as you may, the man who sighed "Would to God we were rid of Canada!" means to get rid of Canada.

If there was any of the old spirit in existence that won the Colony, ■ British Minister would as soon think of evacuating Dublin, as removing the garrison out of Quebec. There would be no such language used as in late years has so often come over the water. Notice, or signs of separation, should come from a Colony, but never from the Mother Country. Compare the tone of the London *Times*, ■ few years ago, with its utterances of a few weeks ago. Speaking of the Alabama Claims, October 18, 1865, it says:—"If the American Government is determined to force a quarrel, as well this as any other excuse." Seven years later, after using Canada as the buffer in this very Alabama collision, the *Times* says: "Take up your liberty, cut your stick. We have left you nothing worth taking, or keeping, you can go." Many a blunder has been committed in the Colonial Office during the last fifty years, but it will be another half century before the words and deeds of Mr. Gladstone, his colleagues and his organs, will be forgotten in Canada.

When an urgent appeal, on behalf of the Canadian Government, was made by the Hon. Mr. Campbell, who went to England for the purpose, that a small Imperial garrison should be retained in Quebec, Mr. Gladstone, forgetting apparently that allegiance and protection are reciprocal, refused the request. Sentimental grievances, if they only emanate from Ireland, receive Mr. Gladstone's immediate attention, but, when Canada asked that a couple of Regiments should be left in Quebec, oh, that was only a sentimental desire, and the wish, of course, was contemptuously ignored. It is a great mistake if any one believes that the removal of the troops, was looked upon in Canada as a work of necessity. Lord Granville's speech, "That four or five thousand men were useless for defence, *while their presence was only a source of irritation to the Americans*," gives the true key to Mr. Gladstone's Colonial Policy. The troops were withdrawn just to please the Yankees (as if anything Britain was to do, could please them) and the Quakers, and all the sound Radicals who bellow for Gladstone. These were the parties whose feelings were consulted—whose interests were considered, for there is no indication anywhere to show, that the people of Great Britain desired the troops removed from Canada, and if the tie between the Colony and the Mother Country is severed in our day, it was the "Peoples William" who cut the knot. The whole scheme of Confederation, mainly acceptable to Canada as the means of cementing Imperial connection, has only been used by Mr. Gladstone and his Cabinet, ■ a lever for breaking the bond.

Britain, in this colonial question, has acted hastily, unwisely, and, with regard to Canada, alike cowardly, and inconsistently. The Imperial Government would not for a day trust the defense of a single strategic point in the United Kingdom, to the unaided exertions of the best of her Militia or Volunteers, or both combined, unless supported by Regular troops, and led by Regular officers, while the defense of British North America is thrown upon the shoulders of a half organized body of Volunteers without Supports, Reserves, or Commanders. Had fair notice been given, that after a certain date the troops would be withdrawn, *but* in no case, before the Militia was in a thorough state of efficiency, and a well elaborated plan of general defense understood, then there would not be so much ground of complaint, or for the general sense of desertion; but instead of this, the one and only desire seemed to be, how soon the last soldier, and the last gun could be hurried out of the St. Lawrence.

To be sure we were given to understand that the garrison in Canada would be reduced to what it was in 1792 and 1822, and were quite satisfied that it should be so; but never were we led to believe, till Lord Granville gave the information, that every vestige, and emblem of British power and connection, should be hurried out of the colony. Such, however, is now the case, and, under Mr. Gladstone's *regime*, we can scarcely hope to see the blunder repaired. What then is the duty of the hour? Certainly the organization and equipment of the Militia, so as to prepare it for any emergency.

Now, this duty should be carried out under Imperial auspices and under the control of Imperial officers, for neither the Government, nor the Opposition are fit to undertake it. Neither party knows anything about the business, and, with very few exceptions, neither care.

Party organization is carried out, and understood to perfection, but Militia organization—that is nobody's child. Any other question of the day, from the liberty of the press, to the Pacific Railway, can be thoroughly discussed and ventilated, by plenty of able men on both sides of the House; but let Militia matters be introduced, and the only desire seems to be, how soon they can be got rid of. The country is congratulated upon the admirable condition of the Volunteer Militia. The Estimates (save that there is a couple of hours' discussion on some of the items, which are sure to be carried), are passed in half a day, and there, you have an average year's legislation for the Canadian Militia.

Since 1862, there has not been the report of a Committee or Commission on the state of the Militia, while the Officers who hold seats in the House are so bound down by party lines, that on one side, they won't embarrass the Government, while the other side, knowing they can accomplish nothing, attempt nothing.

Sir James Lindsay, before leaving Canada, urgently pressed upon the Government, the need of one or more General Officers to command the Militia. Now, there is a saving clause in one of Lord Granville's communications, which would enable the Government, (if they so desired) to meet Sir James' recommendation, that is "If Troops are returned to Canada, on the demand of the Local authorities, proper quarters are to be provided for them, &c., &c." Let the Government test the sincerity of this proposal, for the presence of three or four Regiments of Infantry, and many Batteries of Artillery, would be of

incalculable benefit in the present condition of the Militia, and now that England has plainly demonstrated that Mr. Gladstone's Colonial Policy won't go down, his Government would hardly dare refuse the troops, when demanded for the instruction, and organization of the Canadian Militia.

Such a detail, small as it would be, would at any rate be a nucleus, and a visible connecting link between the Imperial and Colonial forces, as well as being always indicative of the power existing behind it. Their presence too, would keep up a healthy rivalry between the Regulars and the Militia, and help to allay the soreness left by their unjustifiable removal.

Then let the Government take up, as far as suitable for this country, the system now adopted in England. Let the country be divided into as many districts or divisions as may be judged necessary, with a General officer and Staff in each. Let the Brigades and Divisions be told off and detailed for duty at the various strategic centres which may be selected. Let all the necessary supplies for the field, or so much of them at least, as a proper regard for efficiency would justify the Department to keep on hand, be concentrated at the Division headquarters. Let all know their places, and learn how to perform those duties, which they might very suddenly be called on to execute. Let there be a good deal more attention given by the authorities to Regiments, and a regular system of obtaining men be introduced for the Companies. Let a non-commissioned officer be on permanent duty with each company, who should receive the pay for looking after and caring for the arms and stores of the company, and who would be, at the same time, a Recruiting Sergeant for it. Introduce a regular system of inspections and reports, and see that the inspections are made, and reports acted upon. Give rewards for long service and good conduct. Give preliminary drill to recruits; make all officers qualify or resign; organize all the elements of our defensive forces to support each other, and let training and discipline be alike imparted to all.

Time and time again, before and after the Militia Bill of 1868 was introduced and passed, the wants and deficiencies of the Volunteer Militia, and the failure of the Volunteer system, was brought to the notice of the country through the press. No attention at all was paid by the Militia Department, very little more by the general public.

In 1871 all the commanding officers at Niagara camp, brought before the Minister of Militia, *personally*, the actual condition and difficulties of the Volunteer Force, and the impossibility of obtaining men under the present law.

Lord Aylmer, on the part of the officers of Quebec, reported also to the Minister of Militia, *personally*, that the condition of the Volunteer Militia in that Province, was even worse than it was in Ontario, and that it was simply impossible to get men into the ranks—and last year's camp more than bears out his assertion.

The Adjutant-General himself, and the Deputy Adjutant-Generals, without exception, have recommended the ballot as an auxiliary measure, but nothing whatever has been done. No more notice has been taken of their recommendations, than of the suggestions made by those officers who forwarded the famous memorial of 1869.

To all the different articles which have appeared in so many different papers, discussing the Bill of 1868, the only reply in support

was: "It was a tentative measure, and any shortcomings would be removed by-and-by."

Five years have now passed; more than *six millions of dollars* have been expended; the Bill has been criticised from one end of the country to the other; men of all ranks and of all shades of politics, from the out-and-out Conservative, to the ultra Clear Grit, have, in the strongest terms, and with unanswerable arguments, condemned the Act. But there is no change, no alteration, nor sign of any. Nothing whatever has been done to improve the condition of a force, which is certainly now in a far worse condition, than when the Bill was passed. Nominally and upon paper it may appear stronger, but where is the vigor and vitality of 1861 and 1866? The very foundation of the organization (the company unit) is a mistake.

The law allows but fifty-five men in a Company, making no provision for deaths, discharges, or for men leaving the service, by giving the usual notice. The Company should be seventy-five men at the least, and then, when you take casualties into consideration will scarcely ever parade fifty-five men. The Bill makes no provision for keeping any systematic record of the force, for there is no regular system of enrollment, after the first Service Roll has been forwarded. There is no record of deaths, no return of discharges, no system of Company, or Regimental books, no compulsory qualification, for either officers, or non-commissioned officers. I know men who have held rank in the service for more than twelve years, who have never qualified for their position; I know others holding certificates from Volunteer boards, who could not make out a Parade state, or a Ration return, or march off an advanced, or rear guard to save their lives. There is the grossest neglect in the care of drill sheds and armories, as well as in that of clothing, arms, and stores. Uniform coats in the country are the favorite wear for logging bees, while over-coats are in general demand for teaming cordwood. Captains are paid for doing nothing, and do it accordingly, and it is not long ago since the writer had cheques in his hand for officers *who had not seen* their companies for over a year, while another who had lost a number of rifles and nearly all the uniforms, and small stores of his company, *returned for his yearly contingent allowance* with the same regularity, as the officer who hand't a muzzle-stopper missing.

The present Militia Law is defective in nearly every particular. It is lacking all the main requisites of a Military Bill. *It throws the responsibility of keeping up the Force upon the Company officers, while it provides no means whatever of recruiting*, and not till the Volunteers are disbanded (its supporters maintain) does it provide for the organization of the Service Militia. It makes no provision for the organization of a Reserve at all, nor does such a body, in any shape, exist in the country. It leaves the education of officers optional with themselves, and the man holding the provisional appointment, receives the same pay and allowances as the officer holding substantive rank, and who has qualified for his position. It provides for the appointment of a Deputy Adjutant-General in each of the Districts to command the Militia, while in nearly half the Districts, the duties are performed by Brigade Majors. Those in authority are doubtless administering the law honestly, and to the best of their ability; but the law *itself* is at fault, no matter now, who framed it; and if the country wants to get value for its money, and to see the

Militia kept up to its full strength and efficiency, a great and immediate change is a necessity which can't be postponed much longer; for at present the Canadian Militia is the most neglected, and worst remunerated service in the Dominion.

But to regulate all this, and to make the service attractive, will cost money; and where is it to come from? Well, judging by recent events, there is no scarcity of stamps at Ottawa, and if the Government will devote that odd £500,000 from the Fortification Loan to the reorganization of the Militia and the Reserve, it will be about the very best way in which they can expend the money. Besides, they may find less difficulty in getting it transferred for this purpose, than for investing it in the Pacific R. R. They can also pay out of it, (if they can't obtain them any other way,) for the services of the Regular troops and General Officers, which are absolutely indispensable for the efficiency of the Canadian Militia. They can then carry out all the suggestions of Gen. Sir James Lindsay, as well as the recommendation of Sir John A. Macdonald's own Committee, and, if they get time enough, can give the country a defensive force organized on such a basis, as to render it impregnable.

In a former paragraph the question was asked, How long would it take Canada under present conditions to put 50,000 troops in the field, and organize a reserve of the same number? The answer is, it could not be done at all. Assuming the whole 43,000 Militia authorized by law to be available, they would not supply 20,000 effective men, as efficiency is understood in England, France, Germany, &c., &c., and all the Field Artillery in the Dominion, would not furnish that number with the proper proportion of guns. Not a man of the whole force except what old British soldiers might be in the ranks, ever received a day's musketry instruction, nor a day's judging distance drill. Half, if not more than half, of the present material would break down in one week's active campaigning; while taking for granted that everything was as it should be, there is not a solitary officer in Canada, belonging to the Militia, who ever in his life handled 5,000 men in the field.

Is this the state the Militia should be in? Does the country require an armed force at all? Is the Militia a necessity or is it not? If it is not required, why keep up the present sham, alike useless and expensive? If it is a necessity how is it that all representations as to its condition are so studiously ignored, and no attempt made to improve it? A certain Hon. gentleman, member for ——— says:— "Nobody pays any attention to Militia matters at Ottawa, the whole thing is looked upon with supreme indifference. There is a nebulous feeling existing, that we must yearly vote a large sum for Military purposes to show our loyalty, and that's all."

Now, in conclusion, I will simply observe, that after eleven years' experience of the working of the Canadian Militia, as well under the old law, as the new, I am clearly and firmly convinced that it is impossible under the present system, or want of system, to have an efficient or available militia force, and that the only hope for Canada is to have a *short-term* of military duty and training for all (*exemptions to be paid for and the money to be applied to the expense of the force,*) compulsory qualification for Officers, a small force of Regular troops in support, and qualified General Officers in command of the whole.

Date Due

~~OCT 4 1972~~

JAN 19 1979

~~DEC 5 1973~~

MAR 26 1974

~~APR 9 1974~~

~~OCT 10 1975~~

JAN 30 1976

MAR 2 1979

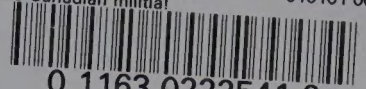
PRINTED IN U. S. A.



CAT. NO. 23233

F 5039 .D3 C 1873
Davis, Robert Henry, d 19
The Canadian militia!

010101 000



0 1163 0222541 6
TRENT UNIVERSITY

F5039 .D3C 1873

Davis, Lieutenant-Colonel

The Canadian militia!

DATE

ISSUED TO

22477

22477

